

**BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
255 WESTMINSTER STREET
5TH FLOOR - PETER MCWALTERS CONFERENCE ROOM
PROVIDENCE, RI 02903**

WORK SESSION MINUTES

Enclosure 4b

March 3, 2011

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2011

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Meeting called to order at 9:10 a.m.

Regents Present: Patrick Guida, Colleen Callahan, Angus Davis, Betsy Shimberg, Anna Cano-Morales, Karin Forbes, Amy Beretta

Vice-Chairman, Patrick Guida, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Regent Nominees, Matt Santos, and Carolina Bernal, for attending.

Commissioner's Updates:

- Commissioner Gist thanked all for making time for this very important work session and went over the prepared materials for review, which were distributed at the last Regents meeting in Cranston.

RIDE staff was present at the meeting so that an informed and productive conversation could take place:

- Mary Ann Snider talked about the NECAP.
- Andrea Castaneda talked about the regulations as a whole.

Before jumping into the details of the public-comment period and discussion of discrete elements of the regulations, Andrea began with a brief overview of the work done since August 2010:

- Clarify role of state assessment as one element of a multiple-measure system; and
- Review and discuss the 2012 deadline and implications for LEA diploma-granting privileges.

Review of Public Feedback:

- About 40% of the comments were directed at either the NECAP or the use of standardized test in general:

- **Test:** Recommendation that we continue to use the NECAP as one element of a conjunctive, multiple-measure system that includes coursework and performance-based assessments, but that RIDE will:
 - Work with our technical advisors and assessment team to develop appropriate supports and retake opportunities.
- About 20% were directed at the previously proposed tiered system:
 - **Tiers:** Recommendation that we change the proposed series of tiered diplomas. And, instead, have a single diploma and the opportunity for students to earn Regents' **endorsements** that reward achievement beyond the minimum.
- About 20% were directed at the timing for the class of 2012:
 - **Timing:** Recommendation that we revise the date that the fully conjunctive system will become applicable, **from the Class of 2012 to the Class of 2014.**

Presentation & Discussion:

Testing area continues to move forward with 3 categories of assessment, with the need to ensure that we have retesting opportunities for students.

Ensure that the districts have the right amount of flexibility.

Regent Guida asked for clarification about what happens if we do nothing and the current requirements remain in effect.

- Based on 2009 data and 2008 Commissioner's review, there are potential implications if we do nothing.

Regent Callahan stated that in the new regulations she no longer sees representation of a tiered system.

- This presentation did not attempt to display all of the layers but rather a student-level view of what students would need to do in order to graduate.

Trends that were uncovered on the analysis of feedback from public hearings:

- Change the tiers to a single diploma.
- Ensure that we have retesting opportunities for students if testing area continues to move forward with 3 categories of assessment.
- Ensure that districts have the right amount of flexibility.

NECAP:

Mary Ann Snider provided a report and answered many of the Regents' questions regarding the NECAP state assessment and its impact on students earning a high-school diploma.

She started by wanting to clarify that her presence not be seen as a defense of the NECAP assessment but rather as an open conversation and chance for dialogue:

- She stated that the NECAP assessment, particularly the mathematics portion, is a very challenging assessment – the design of the test measures student content knowledge that is also very challenging.
- Back in 2003, the Board of Regents approved R.I.'s Grade Span Expectations (GSEs) for all high-school students in math and literacy. At the time, there was a very deliberate decision to elevate expectations for all students in R.I. We knew going into this in partnership with VT and NH that R.I. wanted to be challenged and pushed as a state in both our expectations as defined by our content standards and by the design of our assessment tool.
- At that time, the decision was not made to use NECAP as a conjunctive piece within a system of measures for graduation; but the test itself as a tool is a valid and reliable measure for determining individual student results.
- She also acknowledged that at the time the test was not designed to be used for graduation purposes, but what is supported by research is that the system we developed around the tool of the test can most certainly be used for graduation purposes. The methodology that our neighboring state of Massachusetts used for MCAS that is used for high-stakes testing is no different from the one used to develop the NECAP. The standards to which we hold our students for the NECAP are no different from the MCAS. What they do have, and what the NECAP states need to develop, is a system of support around the test that offers multiple opportunities for students to take the test. We need to construct specific retest forms for students.
- Our current "Cut Score" of partially proficient is what students need to attain on the NECAP in order to graduate. For those students who do not meet that criteria, we need to develop a shorter version of the current test by examining which things that partially proficient students can do and which things that below-proficient students cannot do; rather than have students scoring substantially below proficient retake the test that has a wide range of items that are very challenging, we would develop a shorter version of the test: multiple items that would distinguish if a student is substantially below proficient or a student is partially proficient. That is a different design of test, which we are looking into developing with Measured Progress.

- By looking at the 3,800 students in R.I. (current juniors) who took the NECAP assessment and were not partially proficient this year and how they performed when they were in the 6, 7, and 8 grades, we were able to match 2,400 of them who were significantly below proficient when they were in those lower grades. What it signals is that if they were that low in proficiency at the lower grades, then no wonder they could not demonstrate any ability to handle geometry and algebra 1 as juniors. Because they had no number and operations sense and were so lacking in mathematical foundation of elements, it signals and cautions us about our need to pay attention to data and the results that we have to monitor at a much earlier age. While we can provide scaffolded support to help kids tackle information that is beyond their fluency rates in reading, it is so much more difficult in mathematics.
- There is lots of work ahead and we are tackling that.
- We also matched students who took the SAT and the NECAP. The number of students who scored at the lowest level on the NECAP is comparable to those who scored a 360 on the SATs. With that low level of proficiency, it is irresponsible to send those students off to college and expect them to handle even introductory courses. Furthermore, these data are only for those students who even attempted to take the SAT.
- Regent Guida shared how the validation of the NECAP has been challenged and asked if other organizations have validated the use of the test for that purpose.
 - o Back in 2008 when we wanted to extend the NECAP down to middle school, we checked with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) in the way that we are intending to use NECAP as a measure for the individual student beyond school accountability or district accountability, and TAC confirmed that it was a perfectly acceptable use of the test.
- During the public hearings, someone pointed out a line in the interpretation guide that talked about how the NECAP should be used with other measures and should not be used as the sole determiner.
 - o That is standard language that is put forth in every assessment guide as part of the American Education Research standards for testing, to which NECAP is held. That is standard language and does not mean that the test is not valid and reliable at the student level, and we are in fact using it along with other measures.
- Who sits on the TAC?
 - o NECAP has the benefit of having 3 states' TAC members (20 members) who are psychometricians from colleges, universities, and think tanks and who are

nationally regarded as testing experts who have reviewed every piece of the assessment.

- Regent Callahan voiced her concern about the appropriateness of using the test for information about individual students. Yes, it is about the test, but for her it is about the conjunctive nature of what we are talking about in that when we were originally thinking about a multiple-measures system, we were thinking about a more compensatory system. The conjunctive nature is and has been her concern all along.
 - o What the TAC recommended is that if it is used in a conjunctive system rather than a compensatory system, then we develop a system around the NECAP that are typically used when there is a high stakes decision being made based on a test score. That would include retest forms, multiple opportunities to take the test, and supports for students who do not score at a sufficiently high level to graduate. However, the test itself, is suitable as part of this system.

Regents shared their ideas/concerns:

- Need to inform students as soon as possible and as early on as possible about the new regulations.
- Need to start educating the public as soon as possible, not wait until 2014.
- Young parents are very aware of their children's education – involve them in the decision-making process early on.
- Need to build supports and safety nets for students who do not qualify for graduation in 4 years.
- Cut scores were set back in 2008. Are they rigorous enough, or do we need to revisit?
- Need to offer support to students. We do not have that other test yet; that is why we have moved the regulations to the class of 2014, allowing time to notify students and families.
- Need compensatory model.
- What evidence do we envision that students could demonstrate besides the NECAP?
- Need further discussion of alternate-assessment system – test anxiety.
- Current flawed system is not preparing our students.
- Offer districts multiple opportunities to offer the test to students.

- Need other measures of proficiency and flexibility for those students from who the assessment is not an accurate reflection of their proficiency
- It is a significant penalty to give them a diploma that they do not earn.
- It costs too much for remedial courses at CCRI; we need a standardized test that measures how districts are preparing our students.
- Maybe NECAP needs to be the sole determinate – teach what needs to be taught – but we can no longer wait for the districts to make those decisions themselves.
- What will happen to those students who cannot graduate in the traditional four years?
 - o Multiple Pathways.

Will R.I. pay for the different pathways, as MA does?

- o We are currently working on multiple pathways with higher education and career and tech, but are on hold at the moment due to the current workload regarding the regulations.
- Once these regulations are introduced, everyone will step up their performance.
- It is about the rigor of instruction and the exposure to the content.
 - o Challenge is to get our kids in front of the content.
- Post-regulation will be a challenge – ensuring that student supports are in place and holding districts accountable so that we are not having this conversation again in 2013.
- How are we addressing our ELL population?
 - o We have to increase the level of instruction they are receiving and how soon those students are leaving the system.
 - o 2010 NECAP data indicate that the system is starting to work.
- Support for special-learning needs?
 - o Expansion of the explicit provisions for students with unique learning needs; greater specificity for different student populations.
- Are we happy with the NECAP cut score we set in 2008?
- Accommodations for students on IEPs and 504 Plans.
 - o Math tests can be read to students; accommodations can be made at the local level for a student with an IEP or 504 Plan.

- Will teachers unilaterally decide which students get accommodations?
 - o State will need to monitor that system.
- Provide students extra time.
 - o This year students actually asked for more time to finish the test instead of leaving when the testing time was up.
- Curriculum, instruction and support issues:
- Will the NECAP be given in Spanish?
 - o TAC team is discussing it, especially for math assessment.
- Ensure that students and parents are made aware of their rights.
- Discuss use of different measures- other standardized measures – and other credible measures – managed system.
- Ensure evidence that is documented.
- Review appeals process that is being designed and ensure that it is in accordance with the regulations – monitor numbers.
- Other forms of assessment- performance-based graduation requirements – other forms of evidence – portfolio, CAPSTONE, end-of-year exams.
- Waivers.
 - o Only for extenuating circumstances – carefully managed and not overly extended.

Adjournment:

With unanimous consent, the meeting adjourned at 11:47 a.m.